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INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3003
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 8299
RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 7408
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1189
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 7396
RUESTE/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 6670
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E.O. 12356: DECL: 1/13/89
TAGS: OREP, (SOLARZ, STEPHEN)
SUBJECT: CODEL SOLARZ VISIT TO COSTA RICA

1. CONGRESSMEN STEPHEN SOLARZ AND JAMES LEACH HAD BRIEF BUT PRODUCTIVE VISIT TO SAN JOSE. MOST USEFUL APPOINTMENTS WERE INTERESTING SESSION WITH FORMER PRESIDENT JOSE FIGUERES, HOUR AND A HALF TOUR D'HORIZON WITH PRESIDENT MONGE, JOINED BY FOREIGN MINISTER VOLIO, AND DINNER WITH EDEN PASTORA AND OTHER LEADERS OF SAN JOSE-BASED A.R.D.E. NICARAGUAN EXILE GROUP. THE LATTER WAS SET UP BY CODEL ITSELF THROUGH ARTURO CRUZ, JR. U.S. CITIZEN BRUCE CAMERON, WHO SAID HE WAS WITH CONGRESSMAN TOM HARKINS OFFICE, CONTACTED EMBASSY FROM ALFONSO ROBELO'S OFFICE TO ARRANGE DETAILS OF MEETING WITH A.R.D.E. CAMERON ACCOMPANIED CODEL TO MEETING. NO EMBASSY OFFICERS ATTENDED.

2. MONGE WAS GENEROUS WITH TIME GIVEN CODEL, AND ALTHOUGH HE COVERED NO NEW GROUND, WAS HIS USUAL CANDID SELF IN HIS COMMENTS ABOUT REGIONAL PROBLEMS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT ROLE OF U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN HELPING PRESERVE COSTA RICAN DEMOCRACY, MONGE SAID THAT IN THE MONTHS BETWEEN HIS INAUGURATION AND NOW U.S. ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN "THE SALVATION" OF COSTA RICA. HE SAID THAT IN THIS CONTEXT THE ONLY CRITICISM HE WOULD MAKE WAS THAT IT TOOK TOO LONG FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ARRIVE, TOO LONG (MONTHS) FOR DECISIONS TO BE MADE ABOUT PARTICULAR AID PROGRAMS WHEREAS IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THE U.S. WAS ABLE TO DISPATCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN THE REGION IN VERY SHORT ORDER.

3. CODEL WAS DELIGHTED WITH EXTENDED DINNER MEETING WITH ARDE LEADERS. SOLARZ TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT PASTORA SAID ONE OF MAJOR OBSTACLES TO ARDE'S MOUNTING EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION WAS U.S. SUPPORT FOR EX-SOMOCISTAS WHICH GRN USED TO RALLY POPULACE AND WHICH MADE IT POLITICALLY DIFFICULT FOR DISSIDENT SANDINISTAS TO OPENLY JOIN THR FRAY.

MCNEIL

END OF MESSAGE

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